2; Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

of the very best bullocks or buffaloes to the house of the village headman, and the two killed castrated animals they also take there. 583

The village headman now calls the village people together to a council meeting, and they judge in the matter. They follow the matter up, to find out how it happened. They then also send a couple of men to the girl's home and ask her whether it was with her consent or forcibly that the young man applied sindur to her, and they take with them also from the girl's home a castrated animal (goat or pig). The three castrated animals the people of both sides eat, and the cattle the headman of the young man's side and the village council give in charge to the village headman of the girl's side, until the father of the young man pays the fine money. The girl's father gets sixteen rupees without giving anything in return, whether the young man gets the girl or not. And the headman of the young man's village gets five rupees from the father of the young man. This they call the head-saving rupees. Formerly they have sometimes beaten such a young man to death on account of the crime of forcibly applying sindur to a girl. And this they did not take up for inquiry. The village headman stands to shelter the young man; therefore he gets the money. Of these five rupees the headman gives two rupees to his village people as their share. A girl that has got sindur applied to her they, with a few exceptions, give in marriage to the young man. They afterwards marry the two over again as at the marriage of bachelor and spinster. And if they do not bestow the girl on the young man, she becomes a divorcee. [178]

1. About getting a second wife.

In bygone days they were living satisfied with only one wife; none had two wives. And also nowadays, if they out of licentiousness get two or three wives, they do not call this good; and there are very few such people. But if a man's wife does not get children, then the husband may, both of them agreeing, take a co-wife. The first wife rules the household. And if the elder brother of the husband dies, then his younger brother can, even if he has a wife, keep his sister-in-law as a wife, and they do this in order that the children may not be alienated. And this they do not deem bad. But if some one's younger brother dies, then an elder brother cannot keep this one's wife. A younger brother's wife they honour equal to a bonga, — they do not even touch their bedsteads. 595

Those who commit the fault of getting two wives, will afterwards reap the fruit of this, because a first wife and a co-wife will not live in peace. People say: "A co-wife, needle pricks, they prick"; "a co-wife, ebony firewood, crackles"; "a co-wife, a hen with just hatched out chickens, at loggerheads, they are not reconciled"; "a first wife, kicked in going, kicked in coming, they will endure it"; "co-wives make a dull sound with a wooden slab rapping with the feet"; "a co-wife, the itching of the sika[68], cannot be endured". [539]

[68] Mucuna pruriens, DC., produces an intense itching.

[1] Oslo Ete. Mus. – Bodding.

2: Skrefarud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

m. Hirom bâlhâ (a solatium to the first wife for getting a co-wife).

595 When a married pair do not get children, or a man, only due to licentiousness, or for any reason, gets a co-wife, he cannot, without making his first wife agree to it, bring the co-wife into his house. If the first wife is not willing, she can, standing in the door, meet the co-wife, beating her. There is a customary rule about this. The first wife gets as a solatium for getting a co-wife five rupees or a calf. When she gets this, all three will sit down beside each other in front of the village council, facing the rising of the sun. Husband and wife make the co-wife sit between them on the right side of the man. The man then applies sindur to his first wife, and what is left of the sindur he applies to a ḍimbu flower[67], and with his left hand he sticks this into the hair of the co-wife's head. The first wife manages the house and household.

n. Elopement.

684 When a man and a woman run away to another country to live together, we call this an elopement. A woman who has a husband, or a related woman or girl, whom it is not permissible to marry, such ones they elope with, fearing the husband, or fearing to be outcasted.

If a man runs away with a married woman, they would formerly track them, until they found them, and then cut them down, and none would follow this matter up. Nowadays they make them pay double brideprice and give the woman into charge, and the headman of the village of the eloping man gets five rupees, because he saves his head. And if related persons elope, they outcaste such people. If they do not separate, they will remain outcasted for their whole life, and no one will eat or drink with them, and children of these will not find way down to water (i. e., to be married). If they separate they will "eat them into caste"; but there will be very heavy expenses. If relatives who are prohibited from marrying elope, the parents on both sides will also have to arrange and pay to be "eaten into caste again", they themselves alone; thereby they will be taken into society again. But if they permit the two who eloped to come to their homes, the whole family will be outcasted; and the village people will also be punished, otherwise people will not give them their daughters in marriage either, and will not marry theirs.

[563] To strive after the possession of a married woman and to elope with another man's wife is somehow customary. If they elope with a person of another race, they remain outcasted for life, these two alone, and the parents get more punishment.

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[67] Oxymum Basilicum, var. thyrsiflorum, L.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 8 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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to a man, on the death of the man, such a domesticated daughter's husband has no rights. If a Santal dies leaving such a son-in-law who again loses his wife, the property goes to the agnates of his father-in-law.

Partition

Partitions, in Mayurbhanj, follow the *Mitakshòra* branch of Hindu law, but the parties to a partition, in most cases, voluntarily allow a bigger share to the eldest brother or to his heirs, as *Iyasthangshò* (the share of the eldest brother).

Legal status of Santal women

In Mayurbhanj: The legal status enjoyed by Santal women in Mayurbhanj can be described as follows:—

(1) If a married man has no child, he can marry again according to Santal customary law. Bride-price is paid in both cases.

(2) If a man has more than one wife, even if some of them might be called *rakhni* (mistress, lit. a kept woman) they inherit equally.

(3) A man can marry as many wives as he likes, but a woman cannot have more than one husband at a time.

(4) *Punchayets* as well as law-courts will give relief to the wife, even if called "*rakhni*," who is deserted by her husband or not given maintenance.

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581 [589] like their loin cloth and *möbna*, every one has a 'light' in his house.

With the abundant freedom in social intercourse such as these tribes enjoy, their marriages are generally 582 love-marriages. The proper age for marriage is now twenty years for the lad, and after puberty for the girl in Mayurbhanj. In the past, Santals married [177] adult (about their twenty-fifth year) to men or women of choice ; but now, undoubtedly due to the influence of the neighbouring Hindus, the age for matrimony has come down so as even to infringe the age of consent. Child-marriages are more frequent in Mayurbhanj. Brides, however, must be younger than the husbands but we cannot recall having seen or heard of a wife older than the husband.

595 The tribe does not favour polygamy, unless the wife is barren. The younger brother marries the widow of his elder brother to keep the family property intact. In Mayurbhanj, however, several instances of a man's subsidiary wives came to our knowledge, enjoying a status in law and in the society, exactly equal to their *Mitakshöra* sisters. No 595 instances of a polyandrous system could be directly 835 met with, but the institution known as *Dhàulià Sagai*, which permits a younger brother to share his elder brother's wife with impunity, "only they must not go about it very openly," has puzzled the

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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majority of Santal sociologists into thinking that fraternal polyandry may have once existed amongst the tribe. A corresponding custom is noticed which permits a wife to admit her younger sister into intimate relations with her husband, and if untoward consequences follow, the scandal is avoided by a formal marriage, *Hirom Cetan* (marriage while a co-wife exists).[a]

1. *Orthodox Marriage*

Various kinds of marriages are permitted by the tribe. Now we shall discuss the ceremonials attending them. The first form that deserves mention is the regular marriage, called *Asli* or *Duar Itut Sindur Bapla* in Mayurbhanj. It is the same as what Risley mentions as "*Bapla* or *Kering Bàbu*," literally "bride-purchase," or what Dr. Campbell names as "*Kiriñ Bàbu Bapla*." This system, the most orthodox, is really a marriage arranged by the elders of the family, without necessarily an element of pre-marital love between the couple.

Selection of Bride

Now, suppose a householder wants a suitable bride for his son, he will have a confidential chat with some of his friends about the suitable girls of

a. Risley, *People of India*, App. VIII.

3s Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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595 (3) Hirom Cetan Bapla.

Although tribal custom generally favours monogamous marriages, a fairly large number of Santals in Mayurbhanj have a number of lesser wives. This form is called as *Hirom Cetan Bapla*, which means 'a union while a co-wife exists'. The first wife is known as *Bòtki*, while the second passes on as *Chntki*. That this form often degenerates into mere concubinage will be apparent from the fact that they are popularly termed "Rakhni Priya" in Mayurbhanj, which means a mistress additionally maintained. These wives are allowed all the privileges of wives. And when they die, the husband applies vermilion on their forehead, thus legitimising them finally.

Conclusion

585 885 182 Marriage amongst the Santals serves as the stepping stone to the adult life of the tribesman. Apart from the biological aspect of the increase to the population and thereby to the strength of the tribe, it makes a young Santal a full-fledged member of the community, endowed with all the rights and duties of the adult. On the economic side, the 585 182 Santal now gets a partner in life on payment of a price; and in its social aspect, it means the beginning of a new family, a further source of strength to the clan and then to the tribe.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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implements, and sets up a house for himself and his wife. This sort of son-in-law is called Ghardi-jawae.

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Family not Polyandrous: In the individual family the father is the *pater familias*, whereas in the other type the grandfather or any senior male member is head in every respect; other members, however senior they may be in age, must remain under his authority. In the Santal family all the brothers marry different wives (monogamous) which can be verified from the genealogical trees of the different Santal families. It is not like the normal Toda family which consists of a number of brothers—brothers with one wife, and each house belongs to a family of this kind and is handed on to the children of the brothers (Rivers' Toda, p. 559).

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There are no different terms of kinship for the father, father's brother, as also for mother and father's brother's wife which would not have happened, if there had been polyandry—

(Toda)	Father	... ...	In (aia).
,,	Father's brother	...	,,
,,	Mother	...	Av (ava)
,,	Father's brother's wife	...	,,

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A consideration of terms of kinship of the Santals side by side with that of the Todas shows that the terminology of the Santals is cast in the same way as amongst the Todas. The terms for father and the father's brother are the same, the only difference being marked by the addition of descriptive words like Gongo (elder) or Hopen (younger); so also the terms for

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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[601] the father's brother's wife and of the mother are the same, only modified by the addition of descriptive terms, younger and elder. This might argue in favour of the existence of polyandry amongst the Santals. But the constitution of the family is entirely different. Amongst the Santals as distinguished from the
595 Todas each brother has a separate wife who is
171 always recognised as the partner of that brother only
851 and does not belong to all the brothers as amongst the Todas. When the child is born, there is no question of any difficulty of identity of the biological father, who is bound by individual marriage ties to its mother. This is quite different amongst the Todas, where a sociological fatherhood has to be determined by the bow and arrow ceremony of generally the eldest brother in the family, when a woman is with child. This sociologically recognised father may be quite different and is often so from the real biological father. But amongst the Santals the sociological and biological father is always
591 the same except in cases of adultery. Amongst the
171 non-fraternally polyandrous Nairs again, there was a custom of several husbands visiting a common wife in turn and leaving shoes, etc., outside for prohibiting the entry of other husbands. There is no trace of any such custom nor any matriarchy amongst the Santals, which would have been necessary for such a system of
589 non-fraternal polyandry. True, there is the custom of the junior levirate by which the husband's younger brother has marital right over the elder brother's widow. But this marriage can only take place when the elder brother is dead and there is no question of the younger brother marrying the elder brother's wife while he is
000 alive. Though there is a jocose relationship between

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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Though there is a jocose relationship between them, the elder brother's wife is respected as mother. 607
So also, the elder brother avoids even touching the shadow of the younger brother's wife, not to speak of her being regarded as the property of the elder brother. There is also the custom of sororate, by which a wife's younger sister could be married by the husband. But 587 601
the wife's sister is generally and almost universally married to another. So it is possible that the identity of the terms of kinship for the father and father's brothers may be explained by the levirate. In such a case the father's brother's wife would be a second mother and so the terms of kinship for the mother and father's brother's wife, would be the same. Besides, the function of the father's elder brother's wife in a joint family system is more or less that of a supervising mother; so this also might explain the identity of the kinship terms.

(Santal)	Father	... Apum, now also baba.
„	Father's brother	... (Gongo) Apum (elder), (Hopen) Apum (younger).
„	Mother	... (Ayo Gongo).
„	Father's brother's Wife.	... (Gongo) Ayo (elder), (Hopen) Ayo (younger).

But the Santal family though apparently the same in structure of kinship terminology is quite different from the polyandrous Toda family. Comparing the families of these tribes it can be seen clearly that polyandry is not present amongst the Santals. Mr. Craven and the Rev. L. O. Skrefsrud have stated in J.A.S.B., Part 3, 1903, pp. 88-90, that fraternal 59 601 171 595 [114]

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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595 polyandry is a recognised custom among the Santals and this has been taken up as an official fact in the District Gazetteer, Santal Parganas. But when we compared a Santal family minutely with the polyandrous family of the Todas as above, we found the opinion of these two writers not supportable by any evidence whatsoever.

593 **Husband and Wife**: The definite nature of an individual non-polyandrous family amongst the Santals is brought about by the relation between the husband and wife. When they once settle down to life, it is generally for good; the conjugal love is similar to what we find in civilized society. The husband in important matters consults his wife. At the time of the marriage of their sons and daughters, the consent of both the father and the mother is necessary. There is often a genuine mutual respect between husband and wife. By the legal basis of the marriage, the Santal recognises the ownership of the husband individually, as indicated by the mutual besmearing with Sindur or red vermilion, but only in a minor degree, that of the family of the husband, over a woman. The Santal wife, inspite of her theoretically subordinate position, in practical life has a fair amount of independence and often a position which may be said to be nearly co-ordinate with that of her husband, within her own sphere. The Santal husband and wife carry out the duties towards one another as far as possible in a primitive society. The husband gives clothing to wear, lodging and board and other necessary things which a wife in a primitive life requires, while the wife feeds her husband by cooking food, for which she collects fuel from the neighbouring

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CHAPTER 10

BIRTH AND INITIATION

858 The birth of a child is an occasion for rejoicing, and the event is announced by saying: "The new relation has arrived." Children are spoken of as the gift of *Cando*, which indicates that they are considered to be assets to the family. It is true that boys are rather more welcome than girls; every family desires that the first child should be a boy who will ensure the survival of that [428] particular family within the clan. A boy can inherit his father's lands, and one day he will be required to assist at his father's funeral ceremonies and perpetuate the worship of his own ancestors. Girls are welcomed, though not to the same degree. Through their marriages they will in due course extend the range of the family's relationships, but they bring but a small economic return to their parents, and the bride price received at marriage is not comparable to the expense of bringing them to maturity. Where a family consists of both boys and girls in equal proportion the girls are well treated, and when later on they go to other homes their places will be filled by daughters-in-law. When, on the other hand, a woman gives birth to a succession of daughters she is likely to feel the displeasure of her husband's relations. A third or fourth daughter born into a home where the husband's mother reigns supreme does not enjoy much prospect of survival. Children are valued from the first because of their potential working ability. A villager, on hearing that a birth has taken place, responds at once with the question: "What is it? Does it carry on the shoulder (a boy) or does it carry on the head (a girl)?" Or he may say: "Is it a hunter or is it a water carrier?"[1]

842 There are Hindu shrines in the area to which Santal women [798] resort along with others when other means of securing the birth of a longed-for child have proved of no avail. A spirit who can [796] grant the boon of children resides near the village of Raniband at the summit of a hill which rises abruptly from the plain and [782] is the highest point in the whole area. Cases have been reported of Santal man and wife making the climb together in order to • [595] present an offering. In most cases, however, the husband preserves an air of indifference; if his wife fails to bear a child he is

[195] [192] [1] Another way of referring to the sex of children, though not at the time of birth, is for a parent to say: "I have three *iṛi* and three *orha*", which signifies three boys and three girls. *Iṛi* is a cultivated millet (*Panicum crusgalli*, L.) and *orha* is a cultivated grain (*Setaria italica*, Kunth).

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842 [595]

persuaded to take a second wife. Sometimes he may not be reluctant to take such a step for reasons quite unconnected with the need for children, though usually he is. In addition to supernatural aids there are known to be remedies for ensuring conception, and these are sought from the individuals to whom they belong. The secrets of these remedies are closely guarded. Bodding[1] has listed a number of those commonly known. My friend Binu was in possession of a remedy which had to be taken by the patient during a menstruation period and which ensured the birth of a boy. "No one", he said, "would ask for a medicine to ensure the birth of a girl."

847 [842] [789]

Conversely, amulets are worn as contraceptives, and two different methods are used to induce abortion. One of these is to take drugs orally and the other is the highly dangerous method of piercing the womb with a stick inserted through the vagina. I have heard of the latter method being followed only by girls who wished to escape detection and who therefore could not ask anyone for medicine. Married women who resort to abortion are usually those who have already given birth to a large number of children. In one case which had fatal results for the mother she wished to avoid having a seventh child; another attempt which resulted in a serious illness for the mother, but which was otherwise successful, was made by a woman who had already had ten children.

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Santals are fully aware of the connection between coitus and conception. From the time when pregnancy is suspected the child begins to exert its influence over the life of the home. A pregnant woman is called *poati*, this being the common Bengali term, but here too the Santal love of figurative speech finds full play, and other common ways of referring to pregnancy are to speak of a "full body" or a "heavy body" or to say that the woman is now "two souls". Many of the restrictions enjoined on the woman are due to the physical dangers that surround her during the period and at its climax. These dangers may be brought about not only through natural causes but also by the action of malignant spirits. Thus it is dangerous for a pregnant woman to go anywhere when the sun is directly overhead, nor does she go anywhere alone at sunset. She should not cross a river, though some of my informants affirmed that this prohibition applies only during a first pregnancy. She may not sit on the narrow ledge surrounding the house with her legs

[1] *Memoirs of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. X, *Studies in Santal Medicine and Connected Folklore*, Pt. II, "Santal Medicine".

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587 amount. The man and the woman are seated on the ground facing each other. The man takes a flower in his hand, and applying the vermilion to the flower and not direct to the woman's head he places the flower in her hair. Afterwards he places on her arm the iron bangle. As one would expect, widowers are usually anxious to marry again as soon as possible, for they are greatly dependent on the help of the woman in the home and in their fields. In the spring of 1941 I was passing through a village in which a wedding was in progress between a widower and a girl who had been previously married and deserted by her husband. In that year marriages were scarce in the countryside because the previous year's rice crop had been a failure and not many could meet the expenses of a wedding. This bridegroom explained his position to me in these words: "I just had to be married again. My first wife was destroyed last year, and if I have no wife who will help [123] me in the fields? I cannot pay wages for labour." He pointed to the bride and asked me what I thought of her. My comments were, I hope, extremely tactful; he told me: "She is a very strong woman." Most of the women who contract a second marriage have been divorced. Although there is no bar to widow remarriage, widows do not often marry again. One reason is the [835] existence of a modified form of fraternal polyandry. A woman is permitted to have sexual relations with her husband's younger brother, and in the event of her husband's death it is his younger brother's duty to marry her. Even where the conditions are not favourable to such an arrangement, she is usually welcome to stay on in the home of her late husband. She probably does a good deal more than earn her own keep by her share in the work of the household, and where she has children they belong to the clan and family of her husband and make a bond between her and the rest of the family.

• 595 Cases of polygamy are rare. The most frequently recognized cause of a polygamous marriage is the absence of children by the first wife. Such a wife may be divorced or leave, but sometimes she prefers to remain with her husband, who takes another wife in order to beget children. The only case known to me where a man had three wives was exceptional in another way, for he was one of the few Santals of the area who was a prosperous landowner-cultivator. In all that has been said the assumption has been 591 made that the family is patrilocal. The only exception to this 583 rule arises when a man has no sons but has daughters. In this event one at least of the daughters remains at her own home after her marriage, and her husband, known as a "house son-in-